United Nations A/C.1/60/PV.4

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

First Committee
4th meeting
Tuesday, 4 October 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Choi Young-jin ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 85 to 105 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Shin Kak-soo (Republic of Korea): Today, the First Committee is more important than ever, as the rest of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation machinery is in such disarray. The longstanding stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the inaction of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) over the past two years made the lack of agreement at the May 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) all the more disheartening. It is a pity, under the circumstances, that the historic world summit held three weeks ago was unable to provide the political impetus to resuscitate the disarmament and non-proliferation machinery or to move the pressing agendas forward. Against that backdrop, the importance of the First Committee cannot be overemphasized: it is, at the moment, our best hope for rekindling the light of disarmament and non-proliferation.

As Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted at the opening of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), on 21 September, nothing is insurmountable if we have the resolve to overcome it. The recent progress at the six-party talks is testimony to such resolve. Despite enormous difficulties and deep divisions, the six parties came together with the common aim of realizing the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Supported by the rest of the international community, they were able to reach a historic agreement that leads the way to resolving the North Korean nuclear issue once and for all. We earnestly hope that that hard-won agreement, through its full and smooth implementation, will contribute to strengthening the NPT regime as well as to consolidating peace and security in North-East Asia and beyond.

As usual, the agenda before the Committee this year is extensive and varied. We are eager to participate fully in each phase of the debate, especially on matters of particular interest to my delegation. Today, at the outset of this important session, I would like to highlight several issues.

First, we reiterate our unswerving support for the central role of the NPT in deterring nuclear proliferation, reducing nuclear arsenals and promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In turbulent times, the NPT has been and will remain a lighthouse to guide our struggle against nuclear proliferation. Securing the universality of the NPT should therefore be a priority. The non-proliferation norms of the NPT should be fully observed, and measures for fortifying and complementing the regime should be seriously debated and expeditiously taken.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

05-53568 (E)

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to strengthening the verification capabilities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) through the universal adoption of the Model Additional Protocol as a new standard of verification. With regard to the issue of fuel-cycle control, we welcome the report of the IAEA Director General's Expert Group on Multilateral Approaches to the Nuclear Fuel Cycle. In particular, we support the measures recommended to provide assurances regarding both nuclear fuel supplies and non-proliferation. We look forward to participating actively in discussions on turning the sensible ideas in the report into concrete actions.

Secondly, my delegation strongly supports the early entry into force of the CTBT. Meanwhile, as an interim measure prior to the entry into force of the Treaty, a moratorium on nuclear testing should be maintained. We also support an immediate start to negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, noting with regret that delays in that regard are largely attributable to the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, which has lasted for almost nine years now. We hope that innovative ideas will emerge in our discussions this session on how to break the deadlock and revitalize the Commission.

Thirdly, the nightmare scenario of terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) — particularly nuclear terrorism — remains all too likely to become a waking reality. In tackling that issue, we recognize that the key roles must be played by the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). However, in order to enhance the effectiveness of controls on materials, equipment and technology related to WMDs, it is imperative to strengthen the role of the established export control systems, such as the Zangger Committee, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Australia Group. We also support the Hague Code of Conduct, aimed at deterring the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

Fourthly, in contrast to the dismal progress in the field of WMDs, we welcome the considerable progress made in curbing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Particularly encouraging was the successful conclusion last June of negotiations on a draft international instrument to mark and trace small arms and light weapons. Although the instrument is not legally binding, and although it excludes ammunition and was watered down in certain other respects, it, together with the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, will greatly facilitate efforts to control the illicit trade in such weapons. My delegation hopes that the 2006 Review Conference for the Programme of Action will further develop the basis for preventing the misuse of small arms and light weapons, not least by confronting the issue of illicit brokering.

As a strong advocate for the just causes of disarmament and non-proliferation, the Republic of Korea has done its utmost to participate in non-proliferation and disarmament efforts at the bilateral, subregional, regional and global levels. Our constructive engagement has enabled us to host an annual international conference on disarmament and non-proliferation, in cooperation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs. This year, the conference will be held in early December in Busan, the second-largest city in the Republic of Korea. The Republic of Korea also hosted the Nuclear Suppliers Group plenary meeting in Busan in 2003 and the Missile Technology Control Regime plenary meeting in Seoul in 2004.

By hosting such events, we hope to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to attaining the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation. I assure you, Mr. Chairman, that our participation in the Committee's deliberations will be carried out in the same spirit.

Mr. Al-Najem (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): We wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that your expertise and wisdom will guarantee the success of our work this year. We are prepared to cooperate fully with you as you carry out your new mandate. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. Moreover, I cannot fail to commend Mr. Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his statement at the beginning of the session.

Kuwait supports the central role played by the United Nations in facing the main challenges confronting the international community, particularly terrorism and the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), in addition to other, no less important threats, including hunger, poverty and the spread of deadly diseases in developing countries.

Those threats are interrelated, just as security and development are interdependent, we cannot make progress in one area while neglecting the others. It is unfortunate that we have to compare what has been achieved in the fields of sustainable development, financing and trade to the negligible achievements in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Conference on Disarmament has not been able to agree on an agenda and is still at an impasse, and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has not yet become universal. Military expenditures on all kinds of weapons have increased, totalling more than $4 trillion in 2004. Both the international community and multilateral diplomacy have failed twice during the past four months in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation: first, the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, held in 2005, failed to reach agreement on any substantive issues; and secondly, the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of the High-level Plenary Meeting did not mention the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The lost opportunities to tackle the most critical problems — not only those associated with the non-nuclear proliferation regime, but also those involving the even more important issue of international security — have stiffened the determination of Member States to address this important issue. They should strive to enter a new historic era by overcoming their differences and cooperating to eliminate the nuclear threat and to achieve complete nuclear disarmament. To attain that objective would be to create a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

Although the international community is aware of the threats posed to international peace and security by nuclear weapons and other WMDs, the progress needed to eliminate those threats has not been made because of a lack of political will by some countries to comply with international conventions and treaties. Therefore, it is urgent that we strive to take confidence-building measures to attain the desired objective of a world free from all such devastating weapons — a world where peace and security prevail.

Kuwait, convinced of the importance of collective action, has ratified the following conventions and treaties: the NPT; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction; the safeguards agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); an Additional Protocol in the framework of the NPT; the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident; the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency; and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Kuwait urges all those countries that have not joined the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime to do so. Kuwait also encourages those States that have signed the safeguards agreement but have not yet signed an additional protocol to do so. This regime is considered a basic standard and the additional protocol a complementary mechanism to monitor illegal nuclear activities.

Kuwait hopes that all States parties to the NPT will comply with their obligations as set out in the Treaty and the safeguards regime and that they will cooperate closely with the IAEA to resolve all issues regarding their programmes through negotiation and constructive dialogue.

Concerned about the security and stability of the Arabian Gulf, the State of Kuwait has welcomed the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to cooperate and coordinate with the international community and with the IAEA regarding its nuclear programme, as well as its assurances that it would not develop WMDs and that the programme would be used only for peaceful purposes.

The Middle East region will not see security and stability as long as Israel — the only State in the region that has not yet acceded to the NPT and that possesses nuclear weapons — is not requested to accede immediately to the Treaty, to dismantle its nuclear arsenal and to submit its nuclear facilities to the IAEA safeguards regime. Israel's status is a source of clear imbalance among the region's powers and a source of constant concern in the Middle East, which should be a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. Kuwait calls upon the international community to refrain from providing Israel with scientific and technological know-how that would help to build up the Israeli nuclear arsenal.

Kuwait has highlighted the importance of the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of

Justice in July 1997 on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons in the settlement of conflicts. Kuwait endorses the adoption of effective international measures to provide non-nuclear States with guarantees against the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

Kuwait reiterates its support for the adoption of a non-discriminatory, multilateral treaty that is internationally verifiable to prohibit the production of fissile material for the purpose of developing nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Kuwait welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which is aimed at preventing terrorist groups from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and their components. In the context of implementing that resolution, the competent authorities in Kuwait have prepared a report setting out measures that have been taken to ensure compliance with its provisions. On 16 September, in the framework of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, the State of Kuwait signed the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Kuwait would like to draw attention to what occurred at the fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry Into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and calls on the 11 States whose ratification is required for entry into force to ratify the Treaty. Kuwait calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to continue to respect the moratorium on nuclear testing until the Treaty enters into force.

With regard to the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and efforts to combat and eliminate such traffic, Kuwait welcomes efforts to implement the Programme of Action that has been agreed upon. Kuwait also welcomes the efforts of the Working Group mandated to conclude a legal instrument to combat such weapons, whose dissemination has contributed to many conflicts over many decades and has led to the death of thousands, as well as obstructing the path to development in many countries.

In conclusion, we hope that the Committee will be able to help produce a consensus that fulfils the aspirations of Member States to international peace and security.

Mr. Streuli (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee and to assure you of the full support of my delegation in the exercise of your functions.

The First Committee is the ideal platform for debates on the subject of arms control and disarmament. If we are to have the most substantive exchange of views possible in this context, we believe that it is essential that we implement the measures adopted last year to improve our working methods.

Generally speaking, the international forums for negotiating arms control and disarmament issues remain deadlocked. That deadlock is the result not of the negotiating structures, but of a lack of will on the part of States to engage in negotiations. The interests of States and their priorities still diverge too widely to allow a package of negotiations to be agreed upon. Changing the structure would therefore change nothing.

Unfortunately, the period between the end of the 2004 session of the First Committee and the beginning of this year's session was marked by a series of failures. First, the delegates to the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) parted company without having been able to agree on a substantial final document. Switzerland remains convinced that only an approach which takes into account the security interests of all will enable us to strengthen the NPT. For some, those interests are linked to the risks involved in proliferation. For others, they are tied to the fear of not being able to benefit from the new technologies that are essential for development. Still others are concerned about the slow pace of nuclear disarmament. That is why, in its final statement, Switzerland expressed the hope that the wide-ranging exchange of views made possible by the seventh Review Conference could serve as a basis for the resumption of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

Secondly, the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly (A/60/27) once again reflects the paralysis to which I referred. Diverging views about priorities will again create major obstacles when the time comes to agree on a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament in 2006. Nonetheless, my country will remain open to any existing and future proposals that might lead to substantive negotiations in Geneva.

Thirdly, the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of the summit of heads of State or Government, who met in September in commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, confirms the current state of deadlock in the area of arms control and disarmament, since it contains no reference to disarmament.

Fourthly, Switzerland is pleased to note, on the other hand, that the efforts of the States engaged in the six-party talks on the nuclear issues on the Korean peninsula led to a joint statement whose content seems promising to us. Switzerland welcomes that development, and encourages the States involved in that process to continue to act in a sprit of consensus that will make it possible to translate into reality the commitments contained in the joint statement.

The lack of progress in the area of weapons of mass destruction is worrying, particularly in the light of the risk of proliferation and the potential link to terrorism. Although the complete elimination of such weapons remains a long-term objective, it is essential that we continue our efforts. To that end, Switzerland believes that the implementation of certain measures that are attainable in the short term could bring us closer to the ultimate objective.

The first and, undoubtedly, the most urgent of those measures is respect for existing commitments. Switzerland recognizes the right of all the States parties to the NPT to utilize nuclear energy for civilian purposes. In this context, full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is essential. My country is concerned about the situation that led to the adoption, by the Agency's Board of Governors on 24 September, of a resolution on Iran. My country appeals to all of the parties involved to pursue their dialogue with a view to reaching a solution that is acceptable to all. Switzerland also warmly invites all States to continue to respect the commitments entered into in the context of the various treaties and regimes relating to weapons of mass destruction.

A second important measure is working towards the achievement of universality for all agreements concerning weapons of mass destruction. Thus, the countries that have not yet ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) should do so without further delay, in response to the appeal made in the joint statement of the Conference on article XIV of the CTBT, held in New York in September. The appeal extends also to the urgent ratification of both the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

A third measure is to begin, without delay, and in the context of our mandate, negotiations in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament to halt the production of fissile material for military purposes. To that end, my country hopes that all States members of the Conference on Disarmament will be able to agree, at the beginning of next year, on a programme of work that will allow us to get down to the job at hand. Switzerland is ready to begin negotiations without any prior conditions. It is our assumption that the issue of verification will be part of the negotiating process.

Developments in the area of conventional weapons are more encouraging. With regard to small arms and light weapons, substantial progress has been made in implementing the United Nations Programme of Action. The Open-ended Working Group that is mandated to negotiate a draft international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, small arms and light weapons has completed its work, under the chairmanship of my colleague, Ambassador Anton Thalmann. In its procedural report (A/60/88), the Working Group recommends the adoption by the General Assembly at its sixtieth session of the draft instrument contained in the annex to the report. My delegation would stress that the Working Group managed to achieve consensus in June on the substance and nature of the draft instrument. Pursuant to paragraph 24 of the Working Group's report, Switzerland will submit a draft decision to the General Assembly on the adoption of the international instrument, hopefully by consensus.

Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): At the outset, permit me to join other speakers in conveying my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship and to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in ensuring the success of your stewardship of the work of this session.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, respectively. Let me, at this juncture, extend my delegation's heartfelt condolences to the

Government and people of Indonesia following last weekend's terrorist attack in Bali.

We meet again this year amid the reality of daunting challenges that continue to confront the international disarmament regime. As at previous sessions, issues relating to international security, disarmament, non-proliferation and the fear of acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by terrorist groups continue to be the dominant themes of our deliberations. That is an eloquent manifestation of the fact that, 60 years after the birth of our Organization out of the tragedies of war, the cardinal goal of creating a world devoid of fear of war remains an illusion.

In that connection, Ghana shares the concern of the majority of States over the dismal developments in international disarmament over the past 12 months. My country's initial optimism that the seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) would build on and strengthen previous agreements reached in 1995 and 2000 was shattered by the failure of the Conference to produce substantive results. If the conclusion of the Review Conference was regrettable, then the absence of reference to disarmament and non-proliferation issues in the outcome document of the 2005 world summit is equally disturbing, since it portrays either a creeping lethargy within the international community over disarmament issues or a lack of appreciation of the gravity of the situation confronting us.

In the opinion of my delegation, the recent setback, rather than creating an atmosphere of despondency among Member states, should spur us to intensify our collective effort to achieve the ultimate — a world free from the scourge of war, especially a nuclear Armageddon. After all, it is only in a secure global environment that the pursuit and promotion of other important issues, such as development, human rights and the rule of law, can be effectively sustained. The responsibilities of Member States are unambiguous and we should resolve to unequivocally abide by our commitments.

The 2005 world summit reaffirmed the imperative need for multilateralism, which, admittedly, has been under grave pressure in recent years. Considering the dire strains on the international disarmament machinery, it is not only proper, but expedient, that the revival of multilateralism be embraced in the domain of international peace and security. Now more than ever, we need to work together as a community of nations to address the challenges confronting us. In an environment of collective security, unilateral measures are an aberration, if not anachronistic and dysfunctional.

Given that the attainment of a verifiable missile cut-off treaty would impact positively on non-proliferation and disarmament, efforts must be made to surmount the impasse in the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament and to facilitate the resumption of negotiations on the issue and other related matters. Equally, the Disarmament Commission should be freed from strangulation by the parochial interests of member States in order to enable it effectively to execute its mandate.

Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation continue to be the primary challenges confronting the international community. We concur with the Secretary-General's observation that the two are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, and therefore stress that a progressive process of nuclear disarmament is the sine qua non for the effective enforcement of nuclear non-proliferation. Focusing on one to the neglect of the other is a recipe for the further exacerbation of the current fragile international security environment. Indeed, the unsuccessful conclusion of the 2005 NPT Review Conference and the absence of disarmament and non-proliferation issues in the outcome document would seem to buttress that view.

Despite its shortcomings, the NPT has been widely acclaimed as the fulcrum for the attainment of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. Undoubtedly, the lack of compliance with the provisions of the Treaty and attempts to delink the tripod that underpins its spirit and letter — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear technology — have placed considerable stress on the NPT and contributed to the current erosion of its credibility and effectiveness. While the majority of non-nuclear States have remained faithful to their commitments, the same, regrettably, cannot be said of the nuclear-weapon States. That asymmetrical environment cannot prevail in perpetuity and must be rectified. Ghana therefore joins other countries in calling on the nuclear-weapon States to abide by their commitments under article VI of the Treaty, which was

reaffirmed in the sixth step of the 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 Review Conference.

The continued possession of nuclear weapons by the "5 + 3" States impedes not only the efforts to make the acquisition and use of nuclear weapons anathema, but also the pursuance of tough enforcement of non-proliferation rules. If nuclear weapons are legitimate and of profound value to those States, it is evident that those on the threshold will feel entitled to join the club. The irreversible and sufficiently verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons would therefore be a positive development in our quest to save succeeding generations from the scourge of a nuclear holocaust.

The quest for universal adherence to the NPT is of the utmost importance to Ghana. In that connection, we consider the recent undertaking by North Korea to rejoin the Treaty as a laudable gesture worthy of emulation by non-States parties, as it would inject new blood into the NPT.

A grave concern to my delegation is the perennial issue of negative security assurances. The fear among the majority of States regarding the proliferation of nuclear weapons could be assuaged if Security Council resolution 984 (1995) were affirmed by a legally binding document, as rightly stipulated in paragraph 8 of Decision 2 of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. Legally binding security assurances by nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States would impact positively on the NPT, with its attendant effect on disarmament and non-proliferation.

We remain convinced that nuclear-weapon-free zones are critical components of our common aspiration for a weapons-free world. We have witnessed laudable progress towards that end, as evidenced by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba. We therefore enjoin nuclear-weapon States to support the efforts of non-nuclear-weapon States to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones and implement their corresponding obligations. In that connection, we applaud Mexico for hosting the April 2005 Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, and hope that the exchange of ideas and decisions taken will consolidate the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, serve as a stimulus for the creation of similar zones in other regions, and, ultimately, enhance our common goal of nuclear disarmament.

The quest to promote human security will be a mirage unless the community of nations comprehensively addresses the menace of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The illicit trade, which generates over $1 billion annually, poses a grave danger to peace and security due to their easy availability to criminals, drug traffickers and terrorists.

In that regard, despite my Government's preference for a legally binding instrument, we join other like-minded States in welcoming as a positive development the consensus instrument to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons in a timely manner. It is the hope of my delegation that the instrument will eventually be transformed from its current political and voluntary nature into a legally binding instrument. Such a transformation would affirm our commitment to ending the infamous activities of those who have turned wanton deaths into a lucrative business.

Successive Human Development Reports have invariably underscored the inextricable links between disarmament and development. It is crystal clear that humankind stands to derive enormous benefit from disarmament, not only in the realm of peace and security, but also in the area of socio-economic development. It is morally wrong and an indictment of the community of nations that, while over $1 trillion is spent annually on weapons of death, half the world continues to suffer from acute poverty and deprivation, the fundamental factors that promote and foster terrorism, the bane of the twenty-first century. The development goals enshrined in the outcome document could be attained with only a minimum fraction of global military expenditure.

The gloomy developments in the disarmament regime over the past year place an enormous responsibility on this Committee as it seeks measures to meet the aspirations of humankind for a peaceful and secure world. Although the challenges are daunting, we should be able to rise to the occasion, as long as we have determination, political will and unanimity of purpose. Otherwise, we risk being accused by the very people we represent here of being insensitive to their concerns.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): I would like to begin, Mr. Chairman, by congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau on your respective

elections and assuring you of the full support and cooperation of the delegation of Viet Nam.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the statement to be delivered by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

In the generally bleak disarmament picture of the past year that I will describe in more detail, we see some bright spots. We are pleased to note the adoption of some specific measures to promote implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention: those aimed at developing national capacity to mitigate infectious and deliberately spread diseases and avoiding misuse. The outcome of the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is also positive. More and more States are moving closer towards ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status was declared, and commitments were made by five Central Asian States to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. The Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, which took place in Mexico last May, reaffirmed the belief in nuclear-weapon-free zones as an important nuclear disarmament measure. These are positive developments that should be encouraged as we undertake a more thorough review of the disarmament situation of the past year.

Having mentioned these positive developments, we cannot deny that the past year generally has not been a good year for disarmament. The arms race continues, with estimated global military expenditures reaching a new height and new challenges and threats causing international concern. With the limited progress we see in the reduction of the number of deployed nuclear weapons, the rest of the nuclear disarmament picture is not rosy. Thousands of nuclear weapons exist, many on alert status. And, although the International Court of Justice has issued an advisory opinion concerning the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, we are alarmed at the emergence of new security doctrines that give an even broader role to nuclear weapons.

In the face of this situation, deadlocks remain at the most important multilateral disarmament forum. The Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body, is still unable to engage in any substantive negotiation. The Disarmament Commission has not even been able to agree on an agenda for its work. The seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held last May, failed to reach agreement on any substantive issue. The omission of a section on disarmament and non-proliferation from the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of the recent High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, thus resulting in the absence of any reflection of the concerns, interests and political will of the majority of Member States, only adds to the disappointment of the international community. This overall situation offers no healthy reason for celebration.

The question is: where shall we go from here? The responsibility to ensure peace and security for our own peoples — indeed, for the very survival of humankind — does not allow us to let the present situation endure. We should have been better equipped with a more comprehensive outcome document. This not being the case does not mean we do not have sound guidelines to follow. The United Nations Charter, the many multilateral disarmament treaties and the numerous resolutions and decisions adopted by review conferences and by the General Assembly constitute a solid basis for our actions.

The question remains: do we all want to move forward? In this connection, let me quote the Secretary-General, from his report on the work of the Organization: "Multilateral instruments to prevent proliferation and to promote disarmament must be revitalized if they are to continue to contribute to international peace and security" (*A/60/1, para. 75*).

Over the past decades, the Non-Aligned Movement has always stood at the forefront in the struggle for disarmament. The Vietnamese delegation totally shares the Non-Aligned Movement's view, which stresses the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery in dealing with questions of

disarmament and other related international security issues and underlines the need to strengthen it.

The Vietnamese delegation joins the majority of Member States in reiterating our common position that nuclear weapons continue to pose the most serious threat to international peace and security, and that nuclear disarmament therefore remains our highest priority. While political will to achieve nuclear disarmament is necessary on the part of all States, it is particularly so on the part of the States that possess nuclear weapons, given their obligation under article VI of the NPT to engage in faithful negotiations with a view to putting an end to the nuclear arms race and totally eliminating nuclear weapons. The decision in 1995 to extend this Treaty indefinitely was based on the commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil that obligation. In fact, at the 2000 Review Conference, they did indeed give an unequivocal undertaking that they would do so. We call upon the nuclear-weapon States to honour their commitments. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, efforts for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued as a matter of priority.

Towards this end, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission must be allowed to carry out their mandates. The United Nations must continue to play the central role in this connection. We support the call for convening an international conference on nuclear disarmament.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones has been a positive step towards accomplishing the ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. While welcoming the positive developments in that connection, as mentioned above, we join the call for continued efforts to implement the resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference on making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons.

One of the most important factors in determining the effectiveness of nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties is the participation of nuclear-weapon States in the relevant protocols to those treaties. We welcome China's readiness to sign the protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone and urge the other nuclear-weapon States to do the same.

With the increasing danger of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists, we see the necessity for, and we support, measures to strengthen the non-proliferation regime, including measures to ensure compliance. However, those measures must be applied on an equal footing, without discrimination and with respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. Furthermore, a balance must be maintained between compliance measures and measures that ensure respect for developing countries' right to technical assistance and access to research on, as well as production and use of, nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

With complex developments before us and with the serious lack of progress, the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is imperative in order to review and assess the implementation of the first special session devoted to disarmament and to chart the way forward. We join many other delegations in calling on the Assembly to reconvene the Open-ended Working Group tasked with finding practical ways to hold the special session as soon as possible, and we look forward to actively participating in its work.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me assure you of Viet Nam's willingness to work closely with all other member States in advancing towards our lofty ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): At the outset, let me extend my congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the other members of the Bureau, on your election to guide the work of the First Committee. I am confidant that, under your able stewardship, substantive progress will be made in addressing important issues on the Committee's agenda.

Regrettably, this has been a difficult and challenging year. The 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to set up a balanced and comprehensive mechanism that would facilitate the strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Even more disturbing is the omission of clear recommendations on non-proliferation and disarmament in the outcome document of the 2005 world summit (resolution 60/1).

The process of negotiations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has become highly politicized owing to attempts by certain States to build

their national security at the expense of the interests of other States. In our view, such a position is highly irresponsible. Today, challenges and threats — including those involving the uncontrolled spread of nuclear weapons and the risk of their falling into the hands of terrorists — have grown many-fold. The elimination of those threats requires joint, well-coordinated and effective action at all levels. The First Committee remains a very important forum to deal with these issues.

Universalization of all agreements in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation is of crucial importance. In that regard, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains one of the pillars of global security and needs to be reinforced and protected.

We welcome the results of the fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and urge the Governments of those States that have not yet signed or ratified that instrument to display their political will and genuine commitment in favour of nuclear disarmament.

An early start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty should be the next step in the multilateral disarmament process.

This year, we marked the tenth anniversary of the removal from the territory of Kazakhstan of the last nuclear warhead. Thus, my country has made a tangible contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Kazakhstan is also actively involved in negotiations to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

As the site of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground, my country once again urges the international community to support the adoption of a further General Assembly resolution on the rehabilitation of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan welcomes efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). We are convinced that all States should take measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring WMDs or their components. The Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction represents an essential contribution to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime.

My country calls for the establishment and enhancement of controls over nuclear, chemical and biological materials and their production technologies. Kazakhstan recognizes the special role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It is time to establish similar effective bodies within the framework of the international Conventions on chemical and biological weapons.

We are strongly convinced that outer space should be used only for peaceful purposes. Therefore, we support initiatives to formulate a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and on the threat or use of force against space objects.

Kazakhstan is a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and has joined the Hague Code of Conduct against ballistic missile proliferation. Kazakhstan has also applied for membership in the Missile Technology Control Regime.

It is regrettable that after three sessions the Open-Ended Working Group on tracing illicit small arms and light weapons has failed to conclude negotiations on an instrument that is legally binding. Nonetheless, the international community should not relax its efforts to combat illegal trafficking in conventional arms.

Global security and disarmament are hardly possible without appropriate measures to strengthen regional security. Our country is actively working on issues related to the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA). The CICA process is gaining momentum and has already become an important factor in international relations today.

Kazakhstan is satisfied with the level of cooperation between Central Asian States and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. The Government of Kazakhstan recently made a voluntary contribution of $20,000 to support the Centre's activities.

We support further universalization and enhancement of counter-terrorist treaty mechanisms. Kazakhstan's signing of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism is a practical reaffirmation of that position. We are looking forward to the early completion of a comprehensive

convention against international terrorism. It is also important to note that broad measures against terrorism are being taken within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Finally, I would like once again to affirm our full support for all First Committee efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and promote security at the regional and global levels. My delegation stands ready to work together to achieve our common goals.

Mr. Acharya (Nepal): Mr. Chairman, allow me to express my warm congratulations on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee. I also extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau on their well deserved election. I also express appreciation to Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his comprehensive statement at the 2nd meeting.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, which reflects its commitment to global disarmament, peace and security.

Nepal has always believed that the international community must work together for peaceful coexistence, collective security and disarmament, as they constitute the fundamental pillars of international peace and stability. These objectives can be achieved only if we make genuine progress in disarmament and eliminate weapons of mass destruction from the face of the earth.

Nepal has consistently maintained that all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological weapons, should be eliminated in a time-bound manner. We are firmly convinced that, unless we achieve that goal, humanity's aspiration to live in a world of peace and security will remain a distant dream. However, at the High-level Plenary Meeting, we were unable to agree to incorporate the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation in the outcome document (resolution 60/1). It is also disappointing that the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) could not make headway on non-proliferation, including attaining the objective of the universality of the Convention.

Notwithstanding those apparent setbacks, we should pick up the pieces and work together to attain the cherished goal of comprehensive disarmament. This can be realized through collective efforts, including bilateral, subregional, regional and multilateral efforts.

Nepal supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in every part of the world. The expansion and consolidation of such zones will provide strong building blocks for confidence-building in the areas of collective security, peace and disarmament. My delegation supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in South-East Asia and in the Middle East. We believe these would create an atmosphere conducive to disarmament.

No less serious threat to international peace and security emanates from the illicit use and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, particularly the danger of their acquisition by criminals and international terrorist groups. My delegation, therefore, strongly calls for concrete collaborative measures to prevent such weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists.

We firmly believe that the regional centres for peace and disarmament can make an important contribution to the global disarmament campaign by way of confidence-building, transparency and advocacy at the regional and subregional levels. As host to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, we would like to see the Centre play a more constructive and proactive role to move the Kathmandu Process forward towards peace and disarmament in the region. His Majesty's Government of Nepal is committed to relocating the Centre from United Nations Headquarters, from where it now carrying out its activities, to Kathmandu. His Majesty's Government of Nepal has demonstrated flexibility and has shown its eagerness to sign the host country agreement by accommodating the concerns of the Secretariat. We strongly reiterate our desire to relocate the Centre to Kathmandu and to make it operational within the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. We call upon the Secretariat to conclude the agreement as soon as possible.

At a time when global disarmament negotiations are in jeopardy, we must strive to continue our efforts at every level and on every front to rekindle the aspirations of humanity to get rid of the real menace

posed by deadly weapons. In the daunting task of achieving the goals of peace, security and disarmament, we should work collectively, just as we all must work together in the fight against international terrorism.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to express my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I am confident that your vast experience and skill will enable us to attain success in our work. I thank Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for the statement he made at the beginning of the Committee's deliberations (*see A/C.1/60/PV.2*). I reaffirm that we shall cooperate in order to reach the best possible results in the work of the First Committee.

My delegation endorses the statement made at the 2nd meeting by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

It is no secret that the international political situation does not augur well for the future. We are saddened by the international peace and security climate, in which might prevails over right, injustice over justice and war over peace. Intensive efforts have been made to weaken and marginalize the United Nations — an Organization that was founded to save peoples from the scourge of war.

The justification for stockpiling weapons of mass destruction, with its huge attendant expenditures, has come to an end for all nations. Pre-emptive wars are not feasible; they result in considerable cost in lives and property, and they prove that the present international security situation is only exacerbated through military solutions. We should therefore pool our sincere efforts and our true political will and should respect international law and work within a multilateral framework that can bring about sustainable, balanced international stability.

Some might say that the outcome of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, at which the international community set its priorities in the serious endeavour to bring about nuclear disarmament, has become outmoded and anachronistic. In fact, that does it an enormous injustice. We must return to the Final Document of that session (*resolution S-10/2*) and to what has been achieved since. Here, we must stress the imperative of holding a fourth special session devoted to disarmament to conduct a comprehensive assessment of this issue and address the related failures and shortcomings and their underlying reasons.

The Conference on Disarmament was entrusted with the task of negotiating nuclear disarmament within a specific agenda; here, there have been many failures and very few success stories. It has made no progress in its main task: that of a multilateral deliberative forum to bring about a legally binding nuclear disarmament instrument within a specific time frame. This is due to efforts by some Powers to impede this global endeavour, and to a lack of the necessary political will to bring it about. The Conference has been prevented from fulfilling its mandate, and unjustifiable double standards have been applied in matters of disarmament at a time when nuclear arsenals are being developed, stockpiles of nuclear weapons are increasing and new types of nuclear weapons are being developed — in addition to the threat of their use. Sometimes pressure is exerted on some countries to stop them from possessing the means to defend their security and sovereignty, a right that is safeguarded by the United Nations Charter, international law and current international agreements and conventions.

At a time we are aspiring to general and complete nuclear disarmament and to the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Israel is being totally overlooked. That country possesses nuclear weapons outside the NPT regime; in fact, assistance is being provided to it while States parties to the NPT are banned from using nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and for development.

In the Middle East, Israel continues its hostile expansionist policies, supporting its efforts with a huge arsenal of all kinds of conventional and non-conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. Israel controls a dangerous military nuclear programme that, in the absence of any effective international control or even an international response, threatens the security of the region and the rest of the world. Therefore, the Middle East remains more vulnerable to threats and falsifications than any other region of the world.

Syria was one of the first countries to propose the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and has worked strenuously to achieve that

objective. Syria has contributed to many initiatives to that end — including most recently a draft resolution that we submitted to the Security Council on behalf of the Arab Group on 29 December 2003 (*see A/58/667*) aimed at the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, under collective international control and under United Nations auspices. The draft resolution was also intended to promote multilateral disarmament agreements.

The failure to adopt the Arab peace initiative has encouraged Israel to persist in it refusal to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to subject all its nuclear activities and facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In that connection, we hope that the next NPT review conference will adopt an unambiguous demand that Israel adhere to the NPT and that it will find an effective mechanism to attain that objective in order to achieve stability and a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

The United Nations remains the only forum for sincere multilateral efforts to attain the objective to which we all aspire: the elimination of weapons of mass destruction of all kinds, particularly nuclear weapons, so that humanity will never again be able to use such weapons. In that context, we should like to express our grave concern that the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference to achieve any results that would strengthen that non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

Moreover, the outcome document (*resolution 60/1*) of the High-level Plenary Meeting failed to mention the area of disarmament and non-proliferation with regard to nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. We agree with others that the only positive result of the NPT Review Conference was that it did not retreat from what was achieved in 1995 and 2000. There are many dangers ahead, and we must face them. Therefore, we must not allow facts to be falsified, new priorities to be established or Machiavellian pressures and double standards to be applied.

The fact is that the danger posed by weapons of mass destruction will be present as long as those weapons exist. That is why it is so important that we eliminate them everywhere they may be, thereby preventing their proliferation, so that humanity will never again suffer their devastating effects.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.